



► ADVISING



► PLANNING



► EVALUATING



Your Comprehensive *plan*

ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY AND
PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Change will occur with or without your planning for it. However, community-wide comprehensive planning allows a municipality to manage this change and better achieve the vision you and your residents desire.

Helping you achieve your community's vision

A comprehensive plan is primarily a land use document that provides the governing body of the municipality with the framework and policy direction it needs for land use decisions.

A well developed plan helps identify where and how growth needs will be met, provides guidance for the development of public amenities such as parks and trails, provides for an expected level of environmental and neighborhood quality, helps ensure that public investments in infrastructure are based upon identified needs and coordinated, and provides a

consistent basis for decision making.

It is most often the only public document that describes the community as a whole and its desired vision of the future, describing how, and at what pace, the community desires to develop physically, economically, and socially.

In this regard it has been said that the comprehensive plan is one of the most important *investments* that a community can make in itself since it plays a vital role in the community's ability to manage



THE ADVANTAGES

Developing and adopting a comprehensive plan offers many advantages. It allows for up-front agreement on decisions about land uses, transportation, water capacity, public facilities, natural resources, environmental protection, economic development, housing and other issues, without the public conflicts that arise when these decisions are made on a piecemeal basis. It allows developers and citizens to know what to expect as the community makes decisions, providing a better legal basis and support for zoning and other land use decisions consistent with the plan. This consistency often encourages additional private investment in the community. It provides an additional basis for municipal budgetary decisions, including determining the best use of existing facilities in light of long-term needs. A comprehensive plan is sometimes even required for communities seeking state and federal grant assistance or wishing to become involved in other finance programs.



Components of a Comprehensive Plan

While all comprehensive plans share common components, useful plans are not developed through a generic “boilerplate” but are unique to the specific needs, trends and conditions of the community.

In working with a community to develop a comprehensive plan, the SSCRPC typically approaches it as an eight stage process.

1. **Land Use Inventory and Analysis** — This step includes a survey of existing land uses, conditions of structures, observed land use conflicts, and identified trends in land use changes. Such a survey includes land within 1.5 miles of the municipal limits and requires the preparation of base maps. Usually this information is presented with both maps and explanatory text.
2. **Environmental Assessment** — Environmental factors, both natural and manmade, are examined to determine any impact on future growth. Factors highlighted may include: soil capabilities, flooding, geological formations, and any identifiable environmentally sensitive areas worthy of special protective measures.
3. **Utilities Study** — An examination of utility services provided by the municipality and other private providers is conducted to determine if there are any issues affecting future growth of the municipality. Such analysis may be useful in guiding future service growth as well.
4. **Population and Growth Analysis** — General demographic characteristics and trends that may have an impact on future growth are assessed. Current estimates and population projections are made.
5. **Transportation and Circulation Study** — Existing streets and transportation patterns are analyzed to identify existing problem areas and to formulate a proposed street network to accommodate the proposed development plan of the community. An official street classification map with required right-of-way dedications is prepared for implementation through a subdivision ordinance as land is developed.
6. **Community Facilities Study** — Existing community facilities are examined and the need for and location of additional facilities is assessed. Special emphasis is given to park and recreational needs. Identification of sites and structures of historic significance may be addressed as well.
7. **Goals, Policies and Objectives** — A series of goals and policies are developed to guide future city growth and development decisions. Specific objectives are recommended to implement the goals and policies.
8. **Land Use Map** — Typically the part of the comprehensive plan process that most people refer to is the actual land use plan. The plan should be a graphic representation of the goals and policies for the future of the community. It plots the general location of various land uses including various types of housing, business (both commercial and industrial districts), open space, and a proposed street network.

Public Participation and Input

The Planning Commission believes that one of the critical elements to a successful local comprehensive planning effort is effective public participation and input. This can be accomplished in a number of ways and a public participation plan is developed in consultation with municipal officials.

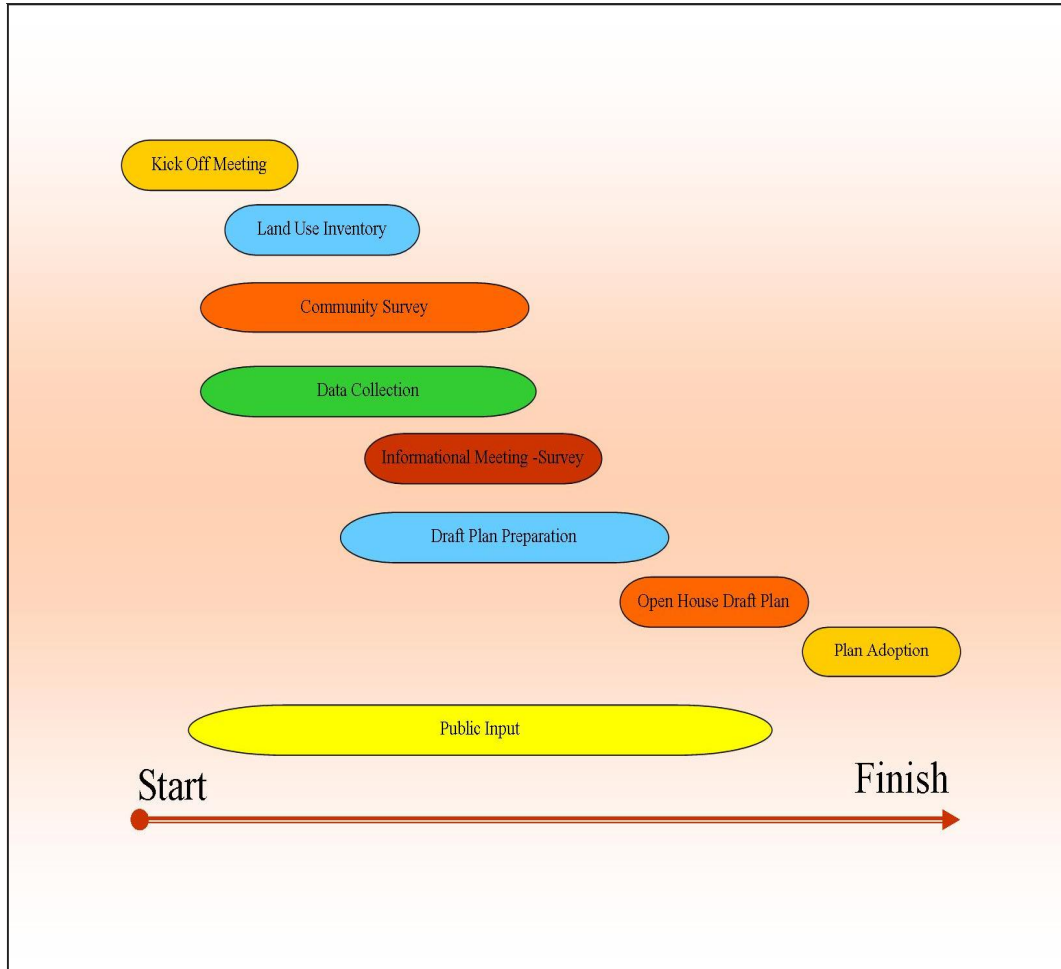
Most often public participation is included through meetings, hearings and open-houses that occur at different points in the planning process. The Commission highly recommends that a community survey be conducted as part of the process. The Commission can design and conduct the survey, or it can work with another survey provider identified by community leaders.





The Planning Process

The steps involved in the planning process are as important as the components of the plan itself. Many planning steps occur concurrently. Development of a good comprehensive plan can take 12 to 18 months depending upon local conditions.



Linking Information Collection and Analysis With Participation

As the chart above indicates, the development of the plan occurs over four general stages: development of the land use inventory; data collection; draft plan preparation; and finalization and adoption of the plan.

The process that the Planning Commission recommends links these stages in plan development to local participation at each stage. Public input is included throughout the planning process and includes such activities as the community survey, informational meetings for the public, and an open house where the draft plan is available for public review and comment.



**Advising, Planning, Evaluating
and Leading**



The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) is the joint planning body for the City of Springfield and Sangamon County. It also one of 14 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in Illinois, addressing transportation planning in the region through the Springfield Area Transportation Study.

Along with its on-going responsibilities to Sangamon County and Springfield, the Commission works with many other municipalities, public, and public/private agencies throughout the region to promote orderly growth and redevelopment, and conducts numerous research studies, analytic reviews and planning projects each year.

The Commission can provide your community with objective, reasoned and cost-effective professional assistance in the areas of community assessment and visioning, planning and program and project evaluation.

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